

THE ART OF THE STRATEGIST

10 Essential Principles For Leading Your Company To Victory

WILLIAM COHEN

WILLIAM COHEN is president of the Institute of Leader Arts and professor of business administration at the Toronto University International. Dr. Cohen, a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, the University of Chicago and Claremont Graduate University, is a retired Major General from the U.S. Air Force Reserve. In addition to his military career, Dr. Cohen has served as director of research for Sierra Engineering Company and as manager of advanced technology marketing at McDonnell Douglas Astronautics Company. Dr. Cohen is an accomplished keynote speaker and authority on leadership, strategy formulation and deployment. He is the author of more than 50 books including *The New Art of Leader*, *The Stuff of Heroes* and *The Wisdom of the Generals*.

Dr. Cohen's Web site is at www.stuffofheroes.com.

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MAIN IDEA

Why is it that some companies flourish whereas other firms with much better resources never seem to realize their true potential? When you strip away all the trappings and irrelevant factors, you'll find that winners consistently execute a thoughtful strategy better than their competitors. If these successful strategic principles can be codified and emulated, you will increase your chances of achieving comparable levels of success.

The word "strategy" is actually derived from a Greek word "strategos" which means "the art of the general". The study of strategy did not start with the evolution of commerce, but actually began with warfare which has been waged for 7,000-years. It is absurd, however, to say that "business is war" because:

- The consequences of failure are completely different for war and business.
- War is not a continuous activity whereas a successful business goes on and on indefinitely.
- Speed is critical to the success of a war strategy, but frequently plays little or no part in good business practices.

Rather than using warfare as a model for business strategy, a smarter approach is to look for the key strategic principles which have come to prominence in the military and to analyze them for lessons that are useful to business. The essential principles of strategy are universal, and apply to all areas of human endeavor – not only war and business but also games, politics and romance.

"I am not a proponent of 'business is war'. However, I do not think it is smart to ignore 7,000-years of genius-level thinking on strategy simply because its focus is on warfare. I am certainly not advocating warfare as a means of advancing technology or human benefit, but I do advocate using important lessons learned regardless of their source. Great thinkers through the ages and different military and other experts from many countries have recommended numerous 'principles of strategy' that lead to success. However, these principles frequently differ, and attempted adaptation of any single set, while providing insight, would not be universal to all organizations or situations, much less to business. Through in-depth analysis and comparison among different sets of principles, analysis of strategic situations through the ages, and confirmation and refinement through empirical research, I have determined ten essential principles that are the basis of all successful strategy. They are distilled from the thinking of the greatest strategists who have ever lived in many areas of human activity."

– William Cohen

"While the essential principles of strategy are often overlooked because they seem so simple, successful businesses do follow common threads of strategy, even when they don't realize it. Their actions, taken either consciously or subconsciously, confirm the universal applicability of these strategic principles. The lessons of the great thinkers and practitioners from history are as applicable today as they have been throughout time. The basic strategy principles used by all successful organizations are so powerful their varied interpretations are conspicuous not so much for their differences as for their similarities."

– William Cohen

1. The 10 Essential Principles of Strategy Pages 2 - 6

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| The
10
Essential
Principles
of
Strategy | 1 | Commit fully to a definitive objective |
| | 2 | Seize the initiative – and keep it |
| | 3 | Economize to mass your resources |
| | 4 | Use strategic positioning intelligently |
| | 5 | Do the unexpected |
| | 6 | Keep things simple |
| | 7 | Prepare multiple, simultaneous alternatives |
| | 8 | Take the indirect route to your objective |
| | 9 | Develop excellent timing and sequencing |
| | 10 | Exploit your successes |

2. Putting the Strategic Principles Into Action Pages 7 - 8

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| Applying
the
Principles
of
Strategy | 1 | Tailor your strategy to fit your environment |
| | 2 | Know what to do in a crisis |
| | 3 | Understand the universality of good strategy |
| | 4 | Match the principles with your resources and situation |

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